

Press Release



Assessing the Relevance of Summer Learning Loss Research for the Pandemic

ANDREW EVANS | JULY 1, 2021

With the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupting education, some are looking to research on summer learning losses to get a sense for how school closures and other disruptions could affect children's development. AAF's Director of Human Welfare Policy Tara O'Neill Hayes examines the literature on the "summer slide" and finds that while the research is largely inconclusive, policymakers can glean some narrow conclusions around which children the pandemic most affected.

O'Neill Hayes concludes:

The COVID-19 pandemic caused severe disruptions in nearly all children's learning environments for a year or more. While past research regarding summer learning loss has produced inconsistent results, making it difficult to use as a predictor for potential fallout from the pandemic, there are a few common findings worth keeping in mind. Studies consistently show that students learn most during the school year, that achievement gaps are well established during early childhood, and that children learn at a greater rate in younger years. Thus, educators should expect that little learning occurred while schools were closed, the youngest children likely suffered the most, and those who were already behind are probably still behind, perhaps more so. Efforts to combat the losses that most likely occurred should therefore target these children in particular.

[Read the Research](#)